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PAGE 01 SANTIA 01022 01 OF 02 162122Z
ACTION IIP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	WHA-00	EAP-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00
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R 162106Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6780
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTIAGO 001022

STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PD, INR/IAA
AMEMBASSY FOR PAO, IO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC, KMDR, KPAO, CI
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: VENEZUELA AND DEMOCRACY

1. SUMMARY: APRIL 16 SANTIAGO DAILIES CONTINUED TO RUN ARTICLES, EDITORIALS, AND/OR POLITICAL ANALYSIS COLUMNS ON THE CRISIS IN VENEZUELA. WHILE ARTICLES FOCUS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE'S DISCOMFORT WITH CHAVEZ' RETURN TO POWER IN VIEW OF PRESIDENT LAGOS' STATEMENT ON FRIDAY HOLDING THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN THAT COUNTRY, EDITORIALS UNDERScore THAT VENEZUELA IS PROOF THAT DEMOCRACY IS NOT A PRINCIPLE THAT IS EMBEDDED IN THE NATIONS OF LATIN AMERICA. HEADLINES AND EXCERPTS FOLLOW.

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 01022 01 OF 02 162122Z

ARTICLES

2. CONSERVATIVE, INFLUENTIAL SANTIAGO NEWSPAPER-OF-RECORD EL MERCURIO, APRIL 16: "HUGO CHAVEZ' UNEXPECTED RETURN TO OFFICE CAUSED PROBLEMS FOR CHILEAN DIPLOMACY... ON FRIDAY, THE GOVERNMENT HAD PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE THEN-OUTSID VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT. YESTERDAY, EFFORTS FOCUSED ON MINIMIZING THE IMPACT OF THOSE REMARKS."

3. EL MERCURIO, APRIL 16: "PRESIDENT RICARDO LAGOS AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS
DATE/CASE ID: 12 APR 2005 200400109

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FOREIGN MINISTER SOLEDAD ALVEAR HAVE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE OFFICIAL NOTE RELEASED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE ON THE OUSTING OF PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ... THE TEXT OF THE NOTE IN QUESTION RELEASED IN COSTA RICA, DURING THE RIO GROUP SUMMIT, SAYS CHILE REGRETS THAT THE 'HANDLING OF THE (CRISIS IN VENEZUELA BY THE) GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA DAMAGED DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS WITH A SUBSEQUENT HIGH COST IN HUMAN LIVES AND INJURIES, THEREBY VIOLATING THE INTER AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER.' ... ASKED ABOUT CHILE'S POSITION YESTERDAY, PRESIDENT LAGOS SAID THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT 'DOESN'T REFER TO THE HANDLING OF THE GOVERNMENT', ADDING THAT IT SIMPLY REFERS TO THE NEED TO AVOID POLARIZATION IN THAT COUNTRY'... FOREIGN MINISTER ALVEAR, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAID CHILE'S POSITION HAS BEEN ALL ALONG THAT IT OPPOSES THE INTERRUPTION OF INSTITUTIONAL ORDER."

4. LEADING-CIRCULATION, POPULAR, INDEPENDENT SANTIAGO
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PAGE 03 SANTIA 01022 01 OF 02 162122Z
DAILY LA TERCERA, APRIL 16: "ON FRIDAY, THE EXECUTIVE HELD CHAVEZ ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE EVENTS IN VENEZUELA. UPON HIS RETURN TO OFFICE, PRESIDENT LAGOS DISAVOWED THESE STATEMENTS, WHICH WERE PRIVATELY LABELED AS 'UNFORTUNATE.'"

5. GOVERNMENT OWNED, BUT EDITORIALY INDEPENDENT SANTIAGO DAILY LA NACION, APRIL 16: "PRESIDENT RICARDO LAGOS SAID YESTERDAY THAT WITH HUGO CHAVEZ BACK IN OFFICE, THE INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES HAD BEEN RESPECTED: 'YOU SAW THE STATEMENT I MADE WHEN THESE EVENTS TOOK PLACE... I SAID I HOPED FOR INSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES TO BE RESPECTED, AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.' ... THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, GLADYS MARIN, SAID IT WAS 'EMBARRASSING' THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT CONDEMNED THE 'COUP D'TAT' LED BY VENEZUELAN ENTREPRENEURS. MARIN ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF BEING A 'BRIDGE FOR U.S. POLICY' THAT SUPPORTS CARMONA."

EDITORIALS

6. GOVERNMENT-OWNED, EDITORIALY INDEPENDENT SANTIAGO DAILY LA NACION RAN AN EDITORIAL ON APRIL 16 ENTITLED "DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA." BLOCK QUOTE FOLLOWS.

"THE EVENTS IN VENEZUELA SHOW THE MANY PROBLEMS THAT DEMOCRACY HAS FACED IN ORDER TO BECOME A WAY OF LIFE IN OUR CONTINENT... THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRATIC

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PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES HAS ENCOUNTERED MANY
OBSTACLES... IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR THE MILITARY TO STAY IN
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PAGE 04 SANTIA 01022 01 OF 02 162122Z
THEIR BARRACKS FOR DEMOCRACY TO OPERATE AND GAIN
LEGITIMACY. DEMOCRACY MUST PROVE IT'S BETTER THAN A
DESPOTIC GOVERNMENT, THAT IT'S BETTER FOR NATIONAL
INTEGRATION, ENSURES INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY, IS MORE
EFFICIENT IN HEARING CITIZEN DEMANDS, AND CAN FIGHT
CORRUPTION MUCH BETTER... WE LATIN AMERICANS MUST LEARN
FROM OUR OWN HISTORY. WE NEED OUR POLITICAL PERFORMANCE
TO FREE ITSELF FROM VAIN PROMISES AND MESSIANIC RHETORIC.
THIS MEANS DEMOCRACY MUST GO HAND IN HAND WITH
RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC POLICIES THAT PROMOTE GROWTH AND
EQUITY. IN SUM, WE HAVE TO PROVE THAT DEMOCRACY IS NOT
JUST A LEGAL SHELL."

7. CONSERVATIVE, INFLUENTIAL SANTIAGO NEWSPAPER-OF-
RECORD EL MERCURIO RAN ON APRIL 16 AN OP-ED PIECE BY
ERIKA LUTERS ENTITLED "CRISIS WITH A PENDING SOLUTION,"
THAT STATES IN PART:

"VENEZUELA'S DIZZYING 48 HOURS... HELPED SORT OUT WHO IS
WHO, AND QUANTIFY THE POWER OF EACH SECTOR. IT ALSO

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 01022 02 OF 02 162122Z
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REVEALED A DIVIDED COUNTRY, A BROKEN MILITARY, AND AN
OPPOSITION WITH NO CLEAR ALTERNATIVE TO OFFER."

8. SANTIAGO FINANCIAL DAILY EL DIARIO RAN AN EDITORIAL
ON APRIL 16 THAT STATES:

"... VENEZUELA FACES NOW ITS MOST DIFFICULT ROLE AS IT
CONFRONTS A DIVIDED SOCIETY AND MILITARY. THIS IS WHY
HUGO CHAVEZ' NEXT STEPS MUST SHOW THAT HIS PROMISES ARE
NOT JUST EMPTY WORDS, AND THAT HE TRULY WANTS TO 'MAKE
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PAGE 02 SANTIA 01022 02 OF 02 162122Z
CORRECTIONS WHERE THEY NEED TO BE MADE.'"

BROWNFIELD

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